



Biden taps VP Harris to lead response to border challenges

By J. LEMIRE/N. MERCHANT/J. BOAK/A. MADHANI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has tapped Vice President Kamala Harris to lead the White House effort to tackle the migration challenge at the U.S. southern border. Biden made the announcement as he and Harris met at the White House on Wednesday with Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandra Mayorkas and other immigration advisers to discuss the increase in migrants, including many unaccompanied minors, arriving at the border in recent weeks. In delegating the matter to Harris, Biden is seeking to replicate a dynamic that played out when he served as President Barack Obama's vice president. Obama turned to Biden early in his first term to lead the White House effort to draw down U.S. troops in the intractable war in Iraq. "When she speaks, she speaks for me," Biden said, noting her past work as California's attorney general makes her specially equipped to lead the administration's response. Biden is hoping to show Americans he's taking the border situation seriously after facing stiff criticism from Republicans as the flow of migrants has increased since he took office in January.

Continued on Page 2



BORDER CRISIS

Vice President Kamala Harris speaks about the southern border during a meeting with President Joe Biden in the State Dining Room of the White House, Wednesday, March 24, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

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Biden taps VP Harris to lead response to border challenges

Continued from Front

The growing humanitarian and political challenge at the U.S.-Mexico border threatens to overshadow the administration's ambitious legislative agenda. But the high-profile assignment for Harris, who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020 and is expected to run for the White House again in the future, could be politically fraught.

To that end, Biden teased in his comments that he was saddling her with a "tough job."

"Needless to say, the work will not be easy," Harris said about her new assignment. "But it is important work." Harris is tasked with overseeing diplomatic efforts to deal with issues spurring



A child rests its head on a table as a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer processes migrants after they crossed into the U.S., early Wednesday, March 24, 2021, in Roma, Texas.

Associated Press

migration in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, as well as pressing them to strengthen enforcement on their own borders, administration of-

officials said. More broadly, though, she's tasked with implementing a long-term strategy that gets at the root causes of migration from those countries. She will work closely with

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the yet-to-be confirmed U.S. Agency for International Development administrator Samantha Powers, and Ricardo Zúñiga, special envoy to the Northern Triangle countries. Biden made the announcement as a delegation of White House officials and members of Congress was traveling to the southern border on Wednesday to tour a facility in Carrizo Springs, Texas, being used to house migrant children. More than 750 teenagers are being held at Carrizo Springs. Like other facilities operated by the Health and Human Services Department, it includes a small group of children who have tested positive for COVID-19, potentially having contracted the virus in Border Patrol custody. They are placed in isolation.

The Biden administration has in recent weeks moved to open more than 10,000 new beds across the Southwest in convention centers and former oilfield camps. It notified Congress on Wednesday that it will open a new 3,000-person facility in San Antonio and a 1,400-person site at the San Diego convention center. HHS is also opening a second site in Carrizo Springs and exploring housing teenagers at military bases in San Antonio and El Paso, Texas.

But the U.S. is exhausting capacity almost as quickly as it can add it. A week after opening, the convention center in downtown Dallas is at nearly 2,000 teenagers, just shy of its 2,300-bed capacity. Experts on child welfare say HHS must release children more quickly, particularly the estimated 40% of children in custody who have a parent in the U.S. ready to take them.

The White House was limiting media access on Wednesday's tour, keeping it to just one TV crew.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Wednesday that the White House was "committed to transparency and we'll continue to work with agencies on creating avenues for media access to and visibility into these facilities."

Still, questions have grown about a lack of transparency at the border as the administration has stymied most efforts by outsiders to see and document the conditions. A Democratic lawmaker released photos earlier this week to show conditions at the facility and to display the extreme challenges that border agents face in watching so many children, sometimes for a week or longer despite the Border Patrol's three-day limit on detaining minors.

Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, who is leading a separate delegation of GOP senators to the border later this week, decried what he said was a "crisis" at the border and the lack of press access as a "muzzling" of the media by the Democratic administration. "Joe Biden doesn't want you to see," Cruz told reporters at the Capitol.

Located at a converted "man camp" for oilfield workers, the Carrizo Springs site first opened to migrant teenagers briefly in 2019 during the last sharp rise in border crossings. The Biden administration re-opened it in February. It has long, narrow dormitories and classrooms set up in trailers, with a large tent that serves as a dining hall.

Officials are trying to build up capacity to care for some 14,000 migrants now in federal custody — and more likely on the way. □

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Boston turns historic page with 1st Black, 1st female mayor

By STEVE LeBLANC

Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Kim Janey, who as a child had rocks hurled at her school bus during Boston's desegregation era, marked her historic elevation as the first woman and first Black person to serve as mayor of the city with a ceremonial swearing-in event Wednesday.

Janey replaces fellow Democrat Marty Walsh, who resigned Monday to become President Joe Biden's labor secretary. She was the City Council president and will serve as acting mayor until a mayoral election in the fall.

Janey hasn't said whether she'll run. But she embraced the groundbreaking nature of Wednesday's transition.

"Today is a new day. I stand before you as the first woman and the first Black mayor of Boston, the city that I love," Janey said during the City Hall event. "I come to this day with life experience that is different from the men who came before me."

Janey, 55, promised to bring urgency to the job. She said her administration will be open to those who have felt disconnected from the city's power structure.

Helping the city emerge from the pandemic and creating a more equitable



Former Boston City Council President Kim Janey, 55, is sworn in as Boston's new mayor at City Hall while her granddaughter, Rosie, holds a Bible, Wednesday, March 24, 2021, in Boston.

Associated Press

economy will be among the top goals of her administration, according to Janey, who pledged to boost testing and vaccine access in neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID-19. Janey also promised to address food, housing and public transportation insecurity and work to close the city's wealth gap in part by ensuring that minority-owned businesses have a fairer shot at city contracts. She also pledged to work to ensure that police in the city serve all residents fairly. "Over the past year, the same communities hardest hit by the public health

crisis have experienced the highest rate of housing and food insecurity," Janey said. "I will address these economic disparities with new urgency to reopen Boston's economy with equity."

Justice Kimberly Budd, who administered the oath, was named chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 2020, the first Black woman to lead the state's highest court.

U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley, who presided over the ceremony, was the first Black woman both to serve on the City Council and to be elected to Congress from

Massachusetts.

Pressley described Janey as "a proud fourth-generation daughter of Roxbury," the heart of the city's Black community.

"She will lead with clear eyes, a full heart, and a steady hand," Pressley said. "She will make a profound difference."

The Rev. Willie Bodrick, II, senior pastor at the Twelfth Baptist Church, delivered the invocation.

Janey's grandfather, Daniel Benjamin Janey, was a member of Twelfth Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. worshiped while attending Boston Uni-

versity. Her father was one of only eight Black students to graduate from the city's prestigious Boston Latin School in 1964.

During the second phase of Boston's tumultuous school desegregation era, Janey was bused as an 11-year-old girl to the largely white neighborhood of Charlestown.

"I had rocks and racial slurs thrown at my bus simply for attending school while Black," she said.

She began her career in advocacy with Massachusetts Advocates for Children, pushing for policy changes she said were aimed at ensuring equity and excellence for public school students in Boston.

In 2017, she won a 13-candidate race and became the first woman to represent her district, which includes most of Roxbury and parts of the South End, Dorchester and Fenway areas of the city.

Janey is also widely seen as hailing a new chapter in Boston's political history.

Those actively seeking the office include three women of color — current City Councilors Michelle Wu, Andrea Campbell and Annissa Essaibi George. John Barros, who is of Cape Verdean descent and state Rep. Jon Santiago are also running. Barros served as chief of economic development under Walsh. □

Masks and gloves are saving lives — and causing pollution

By HAVEN DALEY

Associated Press

PACIFICA, Calif. (AP) —

Disposable masks, gloves and other types of personal protective equipment are safeguarding untold lives during the coronavirus pandemic. They're also creating a worldwide pollution problem, littering streets and sending an influx of harmful plastic and other waste into landfills, sewage systems and oceans.

In Northern California, environmental groups are tracking the issue along the coast — and trying to do something about it.

The Pacific Beach Coalition

recently noticed a dramatic increase in discarded PPE on beaches in and around the city of Pacifica, south of San Francisco, where it's been doing monthly cleanups for nearly 25 years.

Volunteers record what they pick up to gauge what might end up in the ocean. Until 2020, the litter was mostly cigarette butts and food wrappers.

"What are we going to do? We got masks. We got gloves. We got all those hand wipes, the sani wipes. They're everywhere. They're in my neighborhood, in my streets. What can we do?" asked Lynn

Adams, the coalition's president.

The group and others are calling attention to the issue, saying what's recorded is likely only a fraction of the personal protective equipment hitting beaches and oceans.

Larger mammals can ingest PPE, and plastic from the items can disrupt the ocean's food chains. "They're all made of plastic," Adams said.

A report last year by the advocacy group OceansAsia found nearly 1.6 billion masks would flood oceans in 2020 alone, based on global production esti-



A discarded face mask lies in the street in San Francisco, Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

Associated Press

mates and other factors. OceansAsia said masks

could take as long as 450 years to break down. □

Brighter outlook for U.S. as vaccinations rise and deaths fall

By **JULIE WATSON and CARLA K. JOHNSON**
Associated Press

More than three months into the U.S. vaccination drive, many of the numbers paint an increasingly encouraging picture, with 70% of Americans 65 and older receiving at least one dose of the vaccine and COVID-19 deaths dipping below 1,000 a day on average for the first time since November.

Also, dozens of states have thrown open vaccinations to all adults or are planning to do so in a matter of weeks. And the White House said 27 million doses of both the one-shot and two-shot vaccines will be distributed next week, more than three times the number when President Joe Biden took office two months ago.

Still, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, said Wednesday he isn't ready to declare victory.

"I'm often asked, are we turning the corner?" Fauci said at a White House briefing. "My response is really more like we are at the corner. Whether or not we're going to be turning that corner still remains to be seen."

What's giving Fauci pause, he said, is that new cases remain at a stubbornly high level, at more than 50,000 per day.



In this March 23, 2021, file photo, Anita Shetty, left, vaccinates Doris Lucas with a Pfizer vaccine in Atlanta.

Associated Press

Nonetheless, the outlook in the U.S. stands in stark contrast to the deteriorating situation in places like Brazil, which reported more than 3,000 COVID-19 deaths in a single day for the first time Tuesday, and across Europe, where another wave of infections is leading to new lockdowns.

The gloom in Europe is compounded because the vaccine rollout on the continent has been slowed by production delays and questions about the safety and effectiveness of AstraZeneca's shot.

Public health experts in the

U.S. are taking every opportunity to warn that relaxing social distancing and other preventive measures could easily lead to another surge.

Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, sees red flags in states lifting mask mandates, air travel roaring back and spring break crowds partying out of control in Florida.

"We're getting closer to the exit ramp," Topol said. "All we're doing by having reopenings is jeopardizing our shot to get, finally, for the first time in the Ameri-

can pandemic, containment of the virus."

Across the country are unmistakable signs of progress.

More than 43% of Americans 65 and older — the most vulnerable age group, accounting for an outsize share of the nation's more than 540,000 coronavirus deaths — have been fully vaccinated, according to the CDC. The number of older adults showing up in emergency rooms with COVID-19 is down significantly. Vaccinations overall have ramped up to 2.5 million to 3 million shots per day.

Deaths per day in the U.S. from COVID-19 have dropped to an average of 940, down from an all-time high of over 3,400 in mid-January. Minnesota health officials on Monday reported no new deaths from COVID-19 for the first time in nearly a year. And in New Orleans, the Touro Infirmary hospital was not treating a single case for the first time since March 2020.

And Fauci cited two recent studies that show negligible levels of coronavirus infections among fully vaccinated health care workers in Texas and California.

"I emphasize how we need to hang in there for just a little while longer," Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Wednesday. That's because "the early data are really encouraging."

Nationwide, new cases and the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 have plummeted over the past two months, though Walensky remains concerned that such progress seemed to stall in the past couple of weeks. New cases are running at more than 53,000 a day on average, down from a peak of a quarter-million in early January.

That's uncomfortably close to levels seen during the COVID-19 wave of last summer. □



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks during a news conference at his offices in New York, Wednesday, March 24, 2021.

Associated Press

By **MARINA VILLENEUVE**
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo declined to say Wednesday what his office is doing

to ensure a safe work environment for two female aides who have accused him of sexually harassing or groping them. Speaking to reporters from his Man-

Cuomo quiet on how office protects aides amid allegations

hattan office, Cuomo said "there are rules" about how employers are supposed to handle such complaints, then turned to his special counsel, Beth Garvey, to elaborate. "Certainly every individual who comes forward and comes forward is protected from retaliation and we are making sure that occurs in this case as well," Garvey said. They didn't answer a question about whether the women were working from home or offer specifics on how the situation was being handled.

State and federal law protects employees from retaliation, like being fired or demoted, for complaining about harassment.

Several women who worked for Cuomo have accused him of making inappropriate comments about their looks, giving them unwanted hugs or kisses, or making comments they interpreted as gauging their interest in an affair. Among them are two aides who still work in the governor's office. One, who has yet to speak publicly, reportedly said the governor

groped her at the Executive Mansion last summer. Another, Alyssa McGrath, said Cuomo looked down her shirt and made suggestive remarks to her.

The governor has denied touching anyone inappropriately but said he's sorry if he made anyone uncomfortable.

He insisted Wednesday, in response to a reporter's question, that the scandal and ongoing investigations by the state attorney general and state Assembly were not interfering with his ability to govern. □

China bashes U.S. over racism, inequality, pandemic response

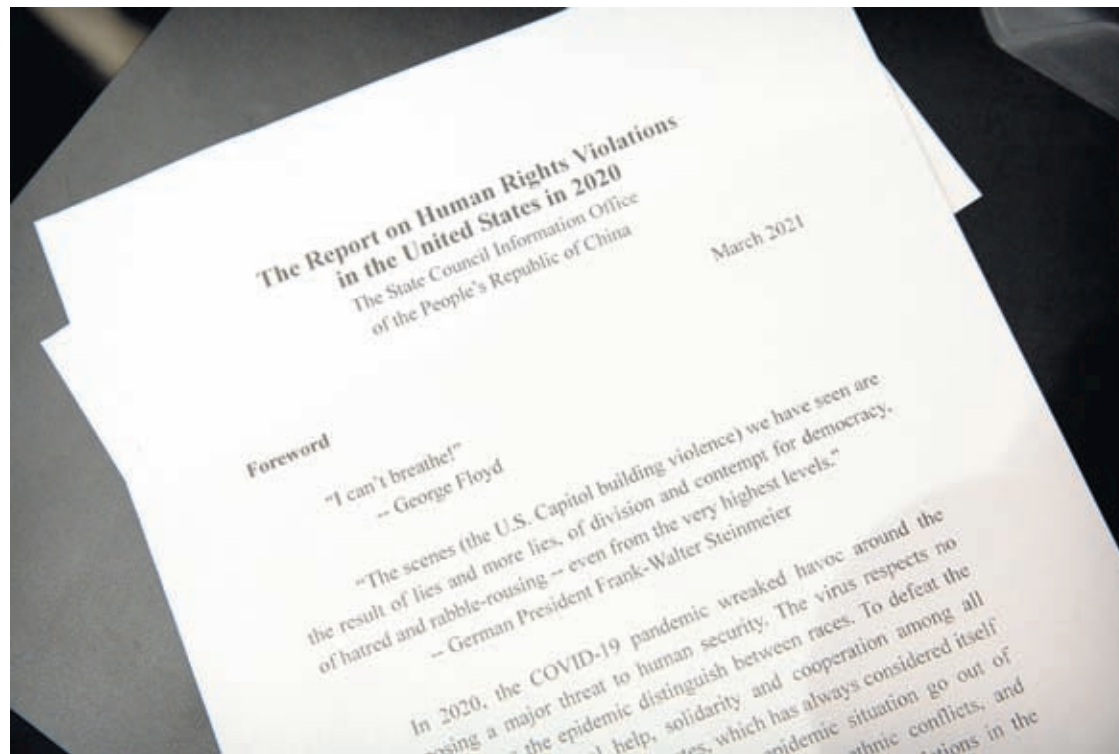
By KEN MORITSUGU

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China took the U.S. to task Wednesday over racism, financial inequality and the federal government's response to the coronavirus in an annual report that seeks to counter U.S. accusations of human rights abuses by China's ruling Communist Party.

The 28-page report issued by China's Cabinet opens with "I can't breathe," a reference to George Floyd, the Black American who was declared dead last May after a police officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for about nine minutes.

The document released by the State Council Information Office said the U.S. in 2020 "saw its own epidemic situation go out of control, accompanied by political disorder, inter-ethnic conflicts, and social division." It also highlighted the Jan. 6 insurrectionist attack on the Capitol as well as gun violence and health disparities. "What happened on Capitol Hill revealed the shortcomings of U.S. democracy," Chang Jian, the director of a center for human rights studies at Nan-kai University in Tianjin, Chi-



A copy of a Chinese government-issued report on human rights in the United States is seen before a press conference at the State Council Information Office in Beijing, Wednesday, March 24, 2021. Associated Press

na, said at a government news conference.

"And that is the two political parties would sometimes do everything they can to advance their own interests. ... They would incite division and violence among the people. So can U.S. society continue to prosper under its current democratic system? I would put a question mark on it." China issues the report each year in response

to U.S. criticism of its record on issues such as abuses against minority groups in the western regions of Xinjiang and Tibet and a crack-down on opposition voices in Hong Kong.

It has used the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed many more people in the U.S. than in China, to highlight the Communist Party's handling of the outbreak and by extension, what it sees as the benefits of its

system.

"To defeat the epidemic requires mutual help, solidarity and cooperation among all countries. However, the United States, which has always considered itself an exception and superior, saw its own epidemic situation go out of control, accompanied by political disorder, inter-ethnic conflicts, and social division," the report said.

"Vulnerable groups be-

came the biggest victims of the government's reckless response to the epidemic," it said.

The Chinese report is based on open-source material, as opposed to the U.S. document, which is largely drawn from work by diplomats, journalists and human rights activists who cannot always reveal their information because of threats of retaliation from the Communist Party.

The report comes after the European Union joined the U.S., Britain and Canada in imposing sanctions on Chinese officials over accusations they abused ethnic minorities. Beijing retaliated by announcing it would penalize four European legislators, a German researcher and European-based rights organization with bans on travelling to Chinese territories or having financial interactions with Chinese institutions.

A U.S. state department spokesperson criticized the recent closed-door trials of two Canadians in China on espionage charges in apparent retaliation for Canada's detention of an executive of the telecoms giant Huawei, who is wanted in the U.S. on fraud charges. □

Flying the flag: U.K. govt tells ministries to wave Union Jack

LONDON (AP) — The British government said Wednesday that the national flag should fly on all government buildings, the latest move in a highly visible embrace of the Union Jack by Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The government has told ministries and local administrations that the flag should be flown every day instead of the current practice requiring it to be hoisted for special occasions, such as the opening of Parliament and the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II.

"People rightly expect to see the Union Flag flying high on civic and government buildings up and



In this file photo dated Monday, Dec. 14, 2020, the Union Flag flies on the top of 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister's official residence in London.

Associated Press

down the country as a sign of our local and national identity," Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick said.

Flying the national flag is less common in the United Kingdom than in some other countries, such as the United States. But

since Johnson was elected in December 2019, the Union Jack has become increasingly visible — an ever-present backdrop to interviews by government ministers from their offices or homes. Its increased prominence is part of a government campaign to stress the unity of the United Kingdom at a time when support for Scottish independence is growing. The red, white and blue Union flag combines the emblems of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which make up the United Kingdom along with Wales. Some Britons, especially those on the left, are uncomfortable with visible displays of patriotism, or

with the flag's associations with the British Empire and Brexit.

Under the new rules, any government building wishing to fly the European Union flag will need special permission. The government says that regulations "to allow the EU flag to be flown on public buildings without acquiring planning permission will also be removed following the U.K.'s departure from the European Union," which became final at the end of 2020. The new fly-the-flag guidance won't apply in Northern Ireland, where displaying British and Irish flags is highly sensitive and governed by complex rules. □

U.S., Europe, NATO close ranks to counter 'aggressive' China

By **LORNE COOK**

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The United States and countries around Europe are closing ranks to respond to "aggressive and coercive" behavior by China, days after the U.S. and its allies launched coordinated sanctions against Chinese officials accused of rights abuses in the far-western Xinjiang region.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that he wants to work with the U.S.'s partners on "how to advance our shared economic interests and to counter some of China's aggressive and coercive actions, as well as its failures, at least in the past, to uphold its international commitments."

Blinken spoke after talks in Brussels with NATO foreign ministers. He will also raise the tense state of relations with China in talks later Wednesday with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

"When we are acting to-



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during a media conference after a meeting of NATO foreign ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, March 24, 2021.

Associated Press

gether, we are much stronger and much more effective than if any single one of us is doing it alone," Blinken said. He noted that alone the U.S. accounts for about 25% of global GDP, but up to 60% with its allies in Europe and Asia. "That's a lot harder for Beijing to ignore," he said.

On Monday, the U.S., EU,

Britain and Canada imposed asset freezes and travel bans on a group of officials in Xinjiang. China retaliated by slapping sanctions on 10 Europeans, including lawmakers and academics, and four institutions. Beijing said they had damaged China's interests and "maliciously spread lies and disinforma-

tion."

Initially, China denied the existence of camps detaining Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang but has since described them as centers to provide job training and to re-educate those exposed to extremists. Chinese officials deny all charges of human rights abuses there. Blinken said in a speech at

NATO that Beijing's retaliatory sanctions "make it all the more important that we stand firm and stand together, or risk sending the message that bullying works."

But views on the way that business and trade should play out differ across the Atlantic.

The EU is China's biggest trading partner but they are also economic competitors. As Beijing has become more assertive in recent years, the 27-nation bloc has struggled to balance its commercial interests with a country that it sees as "a systemic rival" and has human rights concerns about. The two sealed a major investment agreement in December giving European businesses about the same level of market access in China as those from the United States. It was announced just weeks before President Joe Biden took office and raised some concerns that the Europeans were undercutting Biden's leverage as he looked to take a tougher line on China. □

Pope taps Chilean sex abuse whistleblower for Vatican panel



In this April 24, 2018 file photo, clergy sex abuse survivor and victim's advocate Juan Carlos Cruz, from Chile, is interviewed by The Associated Press, outside the Vatican's St. Peter's Square, in Rome, Tuesday, April 24, 2018.

Associated Press

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO**

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis on Wednesday named a Chilean survivor

of clerical sex abuse to serve on a Vatican commission that advises the pontiff on how to protect children from pedophile priests.

The Vatican said Juan Carlos Cruz is the latest member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. Other members of the panel include a bishop, priests, nuns and lay experts.

Cruz and other survivors of a prominent Chilean predator priest were invited by the pope in 2018 to discuss their cases with him.

Decades of sex abuse scandals in many countries, including allegations that church officials covered up the wrongdoing of priests, have eroded the Catholic Church's credibility among the faithful.

Cruz was the main whistleblower on clerical abuse and coverup in his home-

land, one of the more high-profile sex abuse scandals. He is a survivor of abuse by Chilean priest Fernando Karadima, a charismatic preacher who was defrocked by the pope in 2018. The Vatican said Francis inflicted that punishment for "the good of the church."

During the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI, Karadima was sanctioned to a lifetime of penance and prayer for having sexually abused minors in a Santiago, Chile, parish.

Cruz helped spearhead the quest for justice for those who suffered abuse and for an overhaul of the Chilean church hierarchy. He has said he recounted to Francis how Chile's bishops used Cruz's sexual orientation to try to discredit him. Cruz, a gay man, said he told the pontiff of the pain those personal at-

tacks caused him.

Francis' early defense of one of Karadima's proteges, Chilean Bishop Juan Barros, against accusations that he had witnessed Karadima's abuse and ignored it, outraged survivors and their supporters.

But Francis ultimately ordered a Vatican investigation that uncovered decades of abuse and cover-ups by the Chilean church leadership. Francis apologized to abuse survivors, inviting Cruz and two fellow whistle-blowers to the Vatican for several days of talks with him.

Whether the Vatican can convince the faithful it is sincerely committed to stopping pedophile priests and a widespread culture of coverups by high-ranking clergy is crucial to shoring up the flagging trust of ordinary Catholics.

In 2017, frustrated by what she described as Vatican stonewalling, an Irish woman, Marie Collins, who was sexually abused by a priest when she was an adolescent, quit her position on the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Collins was damning in her criticism of Vatican offices, saying some officials refused the pope's instructions to reply to all correspondence from abuse survivors.

Last year, a long-awaited Vatican report about Theodore McCarrick, an influential U.S. cardinal defrocked by Francis after sex abuse reports, made it plain that the Holy See needs to re-think how the church protects the faithful from bishops and other hierarchy who wield authority with often scarce accountability. □

Australian mom convicted of killing 4 children loses appeal

By ROD McGUIRK

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)

— A woman convicted of smothering her four children over a decade lost an appeal in a Sydney court on Wednesday against an inquiry's conclusion that her victims had not died of natural causes.

A growing number of scientists say Kathleen Folbigg is the victim of a miscarriage of justice, though many others consider the series of deaths too tragic to be bad luck alone.

The New South Wales state Court of Appeal dismissed her application for a review of a judge's ruling that "makes her guilt of these offenses even more certain."

Her last hope of early release now lies with a petition for a pardon lodged this month with the state governor. Folbigg's convictions would still stand, but she would be released.

The petition carried the signatures of 91 scientists, medical practitioners and related professionals including two Nobel laureates.



Kathleen Folbigg appears via video link during a convictions inquiry at the New South Wales Coroner's Court, in Sydney, on May 1, 2019.

Associated Press

Folbigg, now 53, was convicted in 2003 of murdering three of her children and the manslaughter of a fourth. She has consistently denied guilt. She was sentenced to 30 years in prison with a minimum of 25 years to be served before she could be considered for parole.

She raised her eyes toward

the ceiling on Wednesday as she watched the three judges hand down their decision via video from prison. "Today's decision and the pardon petition have got many more people looking at this important case than ever before, and many people are starting to ask valuable questions about how we got here," Tracy

Chapman said in a statement written in consultation with Folbigg, her friend.

"Many international eyes are now on this case and there're many more Australians rightly asking why Kath's still in prison after 18 years when there's mounting scientific evidence relating to her innocence," the statement added.

Her lawyers said in a statement the court loss should not impact the pardon application.

None of Folbigg's children survived to a second birthday.

Her first child Caleb was born in 1989 and died 19 days later in what a court determined to be the lesser crime of manslaughter. Her second child Patrick was 8 months old when he died in 1991. Two years later, Sarah died aged 10 months. In 1999, Folbigg's fourth child Laura died at 19 months old. Folbigg was the first on the scene of each tragedy. An autopsy found Laura had myocarditis, an inflammation of heart muscle that can be fatal. But given the deaths of her three

siblings, a pathologist listed the cause of her death as "undetermined."

Patrick suffered epilepsy and his death had been attributed to an airway obstruction due to a seizure. The other two were recorded as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS.

At her trial, Folbigg's lawyers told the jury there were medical explanations for each death. Caleb had a floppy larynx and Sarah had a congested uvula that could have obstructed their airways.

Folbigg did not testify at her trial, but she testified for almost three days at the 2019 judicial review of her convictions based on a pathologist's findings that the children likely died of natural causes with no sign of smothering. The judge hearing the review also heard expert testimony that both girls had an inherited genetic mutation linked to abnormal heartbeats and sudden death in children and suggesting their deaths may have been triggered by infections they had at the time. □

Puerto Rico cracks down on tourists flouting pandemic rules

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— They come from New York, Illinois, Michigan, and authorities say too many of the tourists are flouting Puerto Rico's pandemic health measures, including the mask mandate, the nightly curfew and a requirement to stay in isolation pending

coronavirus tests.

So officials are cracking down, with nearly a dozen visitors arrested over the past six days.

They include three men from New York who were not wearing face masks and got into an argument with a teenager while visiting a popular beach on the island's northeast coast,

authorities said Tuesday. But most of the arrests have been in the San Juan metropolitan area, and a couple of tourists remain in jail. Charges range from assaulting police officers to lying on their traveler's declaration form, which carries a punishment of three years in prison if found guilty.

The lies include falsely promising to honor the required quarantine if someone fails to present a negative coronavirus test upon arrival or agreeing to get tested after landing, said Damarisse Martínez, a spokeswoman for the island's Justice Department.

An average of about 10,000 to 12,000 people have flown into Puerto Rico daily this month, and only about 30% have presented a negative test, according to statistics from the island's health department. □



In this May 21, 2020 file photo, a Puerto Rican flag flies on an empty beach at Ocean Park, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Associated Press

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LOCAL



APA is happy to announce: Celebrity cruises are ready to start sailing again

ORANJESTAD — “We are a year further and it is important to revive the economy once more. Celebrity Cruises decision arrived at just the right time and brings good news for our tourism and economy” as the director of Aruba Ports Authority N.V. (APA) Marc Figaroa declared this past weekend. The return of cruise ships to the island translates into more people arriving on the island and directly contributes to our economy and all those dependent on tourism.

Last Friday, Celebrity Cruises announced its long-awaited return, according to the president and CEO Lisa Lutoff-Perlo. The revolutionary ship Celebrity Millennium, which is at the head of a program to modernize the vessels at a value of 500 million dollars, will depart from the port in St. Maarten on the 5th of June 2021.

By the 25th of March, excited passengers can make their dreams a reality when the reservations open for the 7-day itinerary, which will be traveling till August to some of the Caribbean's most desired destinations. All crewmembers will be vaccinated and the ship will be open for adults who have been vaccinated and children below the age of 18 with a negative COVID-19 PCR test conducted 72 hours before departure.

fore departure.

President and CEO of Celebrity Cruises, Lisa Lutoff-Perlo said: “heading back to the Caribbean after more than a year is a very important moment for us. It marks the start of the end of an exceptionally difficult moment for us all”.

Cruises in the Caribbean: what stands out most of this experience. The Celebrity Millennium's new season in the Caribbean will offer a week of pleasure on a luxury cruise with world-class gastronomical experiences, elegant rooms, and exciting shows all while enjoying the sun, culture, and history of some of the world's most beautiful islands.

The Revolutionary Celebrity

From the deck to the mast, Celebrity Millennium underwent the grandest renovation in history, to guarantee an incomparable new experience of luxury for the passengers. The cruise now has new rooms, restaurants, and newly equipped halls. It also contains a redesigned spa that will provide the guests with relaxation and leave them feeling recharged and rejuvenated.

Some of the improvements aboard include:

- Rooms and suites that have

been completely redesigned and have been inspired by designs by Celebrity Edge's interior designer Kelly Hoppen, eX-hale rugs, and luxurious Cashmere™ mattresses.

- Newly renovated bars and restaurants where the guests can enjoy unique culinary experiences in a captivating environment.
- New boutiques with your favorite name-brand designers.
- Advanced RFID technology in Celebrity's digital key that will grant access to every door in the room.

Healthy on the ocean

The company's main priority is the health and safety of the passengers, the crew, and the people living on the islands that visit the ship. The Celebrity Millennium will navigate with integral health and safety measures designed with the help of the expert guide from the Royal Caribbean Group's Healthy Sail Panel, the global director of public health and the medical director, as well as local government and health authorities. These measures, as well as the required vaccine, will evolve with the current public health.

The details concerning the health and safety measures



Furthermore, the guests must comply with the rules for traveling to St. Maarten, which currently requires a negative PCR test conducted within 72 hours upon arrival on the island. To simplify the luxurious vacation, WiFi, drinks, and tips will now be “all included” on all Celebrity cruises. Additionally, the “Celebrity Cruise with Confidence” offers a flexible cancellation and guarantees the best price. It must also be emphasized that the cruise must comply with Aruba's strict protocols.

A collaboration with the Government, APA, and ATA

To be able to accomplish this, the Royal Caribbean Group had many dialogues with the minister for tourism, Aruba Tourism Authority, and Aruba Ports Authority executives. Aruba showed its willingness to work together with the cruise and health authorities to make this visit possible. This once again demonstrates that Aruba is still one of the preferred tourist destinations for cruises, and also provides recognition for how Aruba is managing the crisis. The cruise will be expected in Aruba twice a month, starting this coming June. □

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By



submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received an amazing picture from **Donald Alhart**. He wrote:

“Aruba to me ...are the endearing and enduring friendships that warm our hearts. Every year at the Marriott Surf Club, we gather for a “group photo” every time someone leaves for home. In this “Covid Year”- we even “FaceTimed”



friends from past years who could not join us. My wife, Mary, and I call it our “once a year” family. Combined with Aruban friends we have made over the years, it is the reason we arrive with a smile on our face, and leave with a tear in our eye. So- “Strike a pose”- and cherish the memories and the friends on “One Happy Island!.”

Papillon: the butterfly effect of magnificent food

PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film “Papillon” starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island’s example where ‘life imitates art.’ The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

“We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget,” says owner Tina. She points out that all Covid-protocol is in place here, they are very keen on hygiene and offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with social distancing in place and right on the high-rise strip.

Oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want something special, a different flow than the



usual then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis with KLM, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Tina: “Our chef is from Peru and at the moment we have the renowned guest chef Griet Vanbrabant who worked in Michelin star restaurants like El Bulli in Spain which happened to be the world’s best restaurant for many years and Pujol in Mexico. So this is the time to come over and reserve your table.”

Let the music play!

On Monday’s and Friday’s enjoy the tunes of the famous performer Marisela who will enchant you with her acoustic performance accompanied by percussion only. On Thursday’s and Saturday’s sax player Jairo will accompany you with some relaxing tunes. The musicians interact with the guests, requests can be send in, the live tunes definitely add to the experience.

Sit back, relax, listen and sing along to your favorite tunes.

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are set up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. “We offer vegan choices that are really good and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too.” What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels. □

Make your reservation today at:

info@papillonaruba.com

or call/WhatsApp + 00297 699 5400

Open Daily: 5pm – 10PM

For all menus and specials visit the website: www.papillonaruba.com.

Papillon
RESTAURANT



Take a seat on the Social Sofa

EAGLE BEACH —Omaira Silva is well-known for her masterpieces. The most popular piece, the precious iguana, can be seen at the Aruba's airport. Now, she is finalizing another piece of art the 'Mosaic Social Sofa' at Eagle Beach.

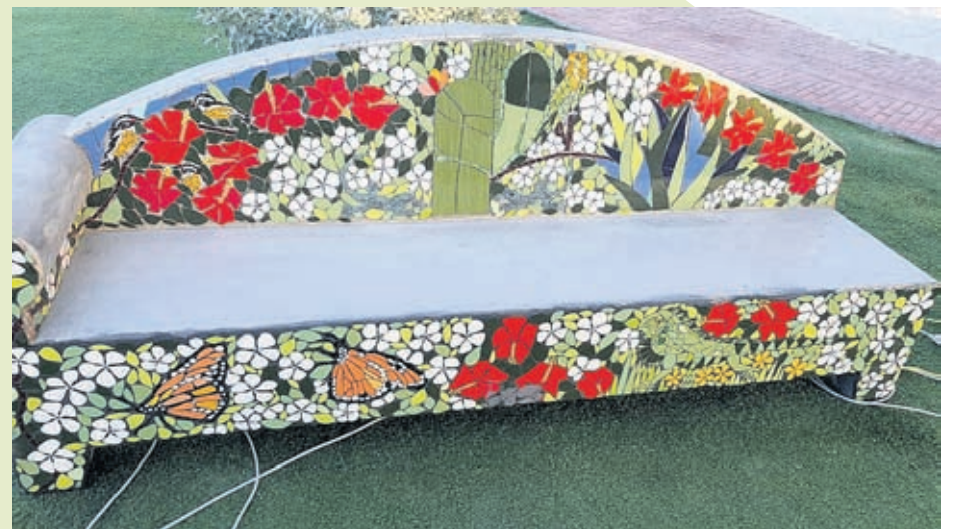
Back in November of 2020, Silva received a phone call from Felipe Da Silva of the MOTA group in charge of the WVB Watty Vos Boulevard, stating that his company needed to install an artistic cement bench to finalize the Eagle Beach Park. Silva was excited and presented immediately the Mosaic Social Sofa project that she knew off and was personally introduced to while visiting Europe in March 2019. During her visit in Europe she located several Mosaic Social Sofas in several cities and communities. Photos were sent to Da Silva and it was a done deal. She would cover or as she calls it 'upholster' the cement bench in Mosaic Art and the theme would be our local Flora & Fauna. The project would have a duration of 6 weeks. Silva started the project on January 17, 2021 and is now completed.

Silva also had introduced the Mosaic Social Sofa to Aruba Art Fair, Tito Bolivar for the section Ban Mosaik project in July 2019, which she is a member of. Having done two Mosaic Art project murals in San Nicolas for the Aruba Art Fair, in September 2016 the Carnival Nymph alongside renowned Chilean Mosaic Artist Isidora Paz Lopez and Carolina Kawal, an Ceramist from Brazil and the 'Cocolishi' Angel Wings in November 2019 as a solo project for which international Mosaic artist Kim Wozniak and Laura Rendlen were invited. Silva was assisted also by model Sandra Vega for this project. However, due to Covid-19 all came to a halt. Therefore the excitement to do this

project on Eagle Beach is understandable.

About the design Flora & Fauna

- Our Shoko, the Aruban Burrowing Owl, (*Athene cunicularia rubensis*) declared our National Symbol in 2012.
- The orange Trupiaal, is also called the Venezuelan troupial and can be found in this region, Curacao and Bonaire,
- The Ruby Topaz Hummingbird for its bright pearly reddish colors and rounded tails and is bigger than the blue tailed emerald,
- The Caribbean Parakeet for us Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax arubensis*) has become the National Bird of Aruba,
- Our Bariga Geel 'chibichibi' aka Bananaquit or Suikerdiefje, or referred as the chickadee of the Caribbean.
- The Kododo blauw (*Cnemidophorus arubensis*) Aruban Whiptail Lizard aka 'renhagedis' as they swiftly disappear, just love those bright blue spots.
- Our Iguana, locally better known as nos Yuwana, an adult iguana's color normally is a grayish green, while a young iguana is a bright neon green
- The Monarch Butterfly and the small yellow butterflies that always dart in every garden,
- Flora: The greenery in different shades of green our local flora, Kadushi Largo, the Prickly Pear/barbari fig, glass pebbles and marbles for the sparkle, the Bushi Cacti, the Aloe Vera giving it different shades of green and blue, Shrubs and Hedges as background and also added the tropical Hibiscus/Cayena Red flower to bring some more color into this project. The dark green evergreen type leaves. The White Periwinkle flowers or Vinca, as they grow



wild on our island and for sure in many gardens. She also added a few yellow Wanglo flowers under the iguana located on the front of the bench, to take it a little out of the camouflage.

Every piece of ceramic tile is hand cut with much detail, placed with precision, passion, dedication, patience, hard work grouting, polishing and all with love for the art to bring it all together.

The selection of the local flora & fauna for this social sofa project was done in a playful, colorful whimsical approach as hope to contribute and help to boost awareness of nature on Aruba to ensure that especially our national birds do not disappear from the Aruban landscape. Most of the detailed mosaic art was created in her home studio and installed on location at the Eagle Beach Park, which attracted many visitors and created many social gatherings. Silva is pleasantly amazed how children interact with the art work, it pleases her immensely.

Just to imagine, parents sitting on a piece of art, stylish bench watching their kids play in the play park, or just when one is on a break from work to sit back and relax or read a book, or just sit in the sun, join a friend for a conversation and suddenly the Mosaic Social Sofa becomes an extension of one's living room.

Silva's dream is to have many Mosaic Social Sofas around the island in communities, bus stops, on a square, schools, mall or downtown created with the members of the community, a great team/friendship building moments.

Her wish is for everyone to preserve our Mosaic Social Sofa, to use extra caution as tiles do break, crack, chip or get damaged, to use TLC,



no sharp objects, or use it as a resting place for bicycles, to be socially responsible for this Mosaic Social Sofa to last and be preserved for a long time, just like any equipment in the park. □



5 pandemic-driven financial habits worth keeping

By **KIMBERLY PALMER** of NerdWallet

As the pandemic shut down the world around her, Ashli Smith, an Atlanta resident and mom to a newborn, says she set up autopay for her recurring bills to help her stay organized and avoid late payments. "With everything going on, plus being a mom, I don't want to forget to pay something or someone," she says.

While the pandemic caused incredible financial stress and uncertainty, it also led many consumers like Smith to form new financial habits worth keeping, including saving more and spending less. A NerdWallet survey found that most people who formed new financial habits plan to continue them into 2021. Here are five habits to consider sticking with even as life starts to return to normal:

1. SPEND LESS, SAVE MORE

For many Americans, spending less amid the pandemic came naturally because of income loss or fewer spending options after restaurants and travel largely shut down. NerdWallet's survey found that among those who



In this Sept. 25, 2020 file photo, a woman shops at a discount clothing store, in New York.

Associated Press

said they picked up new financial habits during the pandemic that they plan to carry into 2021, 58% said they were cutting back spending on "wants" and 36% said they were cutting back spending on "needs." "If your job was eliminated or your pay was reduced, then you've probably decreased spending and gotten used to a lower monthly budget," says Eric Simonson, certified financial planner and owner of Minneapolis firm Abundo Wealth. "As soon as that income returns, it would be an amazing opportunity to keep expenses the same

but save all of that new income." Natalie Slagle, founding partner at Fyooz Financial Planning and a CFP based in Rochester, Minnesota says, "For those who were furloughed or laid off, the No. 1 priority is replenishing savings."

"For those who got used to spending less, she says, "we encourage them to sustain that habit so their cash flow can go toward building up their emergency fund at a higher rate than what was possible before the pandemic." That way, it's easier to handle the next crisis, whether it's income loss or an unexpected expense,

without taking on more debt.

2. STICK WITH A BUDGET

In the NerdWallet survey, 39% of those who adopted new habits that they plan to carry into 2021 said that one of those habits was sticking to a budget.

"So many people have looked at their budgeting and spending during (the pandemic), often for the first time," Simonson says. "It's important to stick with this post-pandemic, since keeping a budget is part of a healthy financial plan."

Many people turned to budgeting to help regain a sense of control that the pandemic took from them, he adds. "The financial habits you've been forced to learn and adopt have the power to create huge, positive, lasting change if you stick with them," Simonson adds. Continuing to budget makes it easier to generate long-term savings and avoid debt, for example.

3. MINIMIZE TRAVEL EXPENSES

Among survey respondents, 40% said one of the new habits they plan to continue in 2021 was cutting back on travel spend-

ing. "One reason we saw our clients enjoy lower expenses (during the pandemic) is because they didn't go on their planned vacations," Slagle says. "Not only did that cut expenses, but they also have flight vouchers and unused travel miles to spend."

As travel begins to start again, Slagle says she's helping clients plan on using some of those savings and credits on their next trip to avoid overspending.

4. EARN EXTRA INCOME

Based on the study, among those who developed new financial habits, just over a quarter said they picked up a side hustle or extra work to make money. Kevin Mahoney — a CFP and founder of Illumint, a financial planning firm for millennials based in Washington, D.C. — says earning a side income can help provide financial stability during uncertain times, which is why he encourages his clients to consider it.

"Supplemental income mimics an emergency savings fund. People who can consistently generate self-income are better prepared to withstand financial volatility," he says. □

Happy tail: Maine lobstermen crack a good year despite virus

By **PATRICK WHITTLE**

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)

— Maine's lobster catch dipped slightly last year as fishermen dealt with the coronavirus pandemic, but the final totals were better than some feared. Fishermen caught more than 96 million pounds of lobsters in 2020, the Maine Department of Marine Resources said Wednesday. That total broke a string of nine consecutive years in which harvesters brought at least 100 million pounds of lobsters to land.

Maine is by far the biggest lobster fishing state in the country, and the harvest is central to the state's economy and heritage. Members of the industry feared at the outset of the pandemic that it would be difficult to equal previous



In this May 29, 2020 file photo, Eric Pray unpacks a lobster on a wharf in Portland, Maine.

Associated Press

years' hauls because of the toll of the virus on the economy and the workforce.

However, the 2020 catch would have been a state record as recently as 2010. A boom in annual lobster catch began more than a decade ago.

Fishermen were selective about when they went fishing last year to avoid bringing too much product to land when demand was lower, said Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association.

"The industry was certainly

facing a lot of challenges, and fishermen purposefully slowed their effort down to keep pace with the market," McCarron said. "So those are great numbers." Prices were also competitive. The marine resources department reported the catch was worth more than \$400 million. The lobsters were worth \$4.20 per pound at the docks, which was 62 cents less than 2019, but higher than the previous 11 years before that.

The industry achieved strong prices despite difficulty shipping and worldwide economic turmoil caused by the pandemic. The industry focused on opening up domestic retail sales, such as at supermarkets, to keep prices strong, McCarron said. The industry also pivoted to

more online direct-to-consumer sales. Some lobstermen even took to selling lobsters from tanks in their own garages and homes. "Maine fishermen and seafood dealers weathered one of the most difficult years in memory, but through hard work and an unwavering dedication to quality, they were able to once again provide tremendous value for seafood consumers, and a vital economic foundation for Maine's coastal communities," said Maine Gov. Janet Mills, a Democrat. Maine lobster fishermen brought a record lobster haul to docks in 2016, when they caught 132.6 million pounds. Last year's 96.6 million pound catch is a little more than 5 million pounds less than the 2019 total. □

New study triples estimate of red snapper in Gulf of Mexico

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — There are about three times as many red snapper as previously estimated in the Gulf of Mexico, according to a study released Wednesday about the popular game and table fish over which recreational anglers and federal regulators have fought for years.

The \$12 million Great Red Snapper Count estimated that the Gulf holds about 110 million adult red snapper -- those at least 2 years old. A 2018 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration marine fisheries' estimate was about 36 million.

Clay Porch, director of NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center Director in Miami, said peer reviewers will be going over the science for the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council, which is likely to consider revising quotas in April, Porch said Tuesday.

For various reasons, the quotas are unlikely to be



In this Sept. 14, 2012 file photo, the haul of Red Snapper and Triggerfish from the fishing boat Waterproof hang on the rack at the Critter Fleet in Ponce Inlet, Fla.

Associated Press

tripled, he said.

The increased population estimate is almost entirely because federal scientists previously have relied on information from a fishery concentrated on natural and artificial reefs, while the new study also looks

at the immense spaces in between, Porch said.

More than 60% of the red snapper were in areas that previously had not been checked, according to the study by 20 scientists from 14 universities and NOAA.

"Sand and mud makes up

the vastness of the Gulf of Mexico," but it is dotted with remnant oyster reefs, salt domes, holes scoured out by currents, shipwrecks, fallen shipping containers and other bottom features that would attract red snapper, lead researcher

Greg Stunz of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi said Monday. Suspended sediment makes the area west of the Mississippi River so murky that researchers designed new acoustic equipment for the project, Stunz said.

The report estimated that about 48 million adult red snapper swim off Florida, 29 million off Louisiana, 23 million off Texas and 10 million off Mississippi and Alabama.

That included about 31 million in previously unchecked areas off Florida. An estimated 17 million live in such areas off Louisiana, 16 million off Texas and 4 million off Mississippi and Alabama.

That means "we have a reserve that is not directly targeted" for fishing, Stunz said.

Will White, a fisheries population expert at Oregon State University, said that although he hadn't been able to study the report in depth, "it uses standard methods and takes appropriate precautions with the data." □

Part of Wright brothers' 1st airplane on NASA's Mars chopper

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)

— A piece of the Wright brothers' first airplane is on Mars. NASA's experimental Martian helicopter holds a small swatch of fabric from the 1903 Wright Flyer, the

space agency revealed Tuesday. The helicopter, named Ingenuity, hitched a ride to the red planet with the Perseverance rover, arriving last month.

Ingenuity will attempt the first powered, controlled flight on another planet no

sooner than April 8. It will mark a "Wright brothers' moment," noted Bobby Braun, director for planetary science at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The Carillon Historical Park in Dayton, Ohio, the Wrights' hometown, donated the postage-size piece of muslin from the plane's bottom left wing, at NASA's request.

The swatch made the 300 million-mile journey to Mars with the blessing of the Wright brothers' great-grandniece and great-grandnephew, said park curator Steve Lucht.

"Wilbur and Orville Wright would be pleased to know that a little piece of their 1903 Wright Flyer I, the machine that launched the Space Age by barely one quarter of a mile, is going to soar into history again on Mars!" Amanda Wright Lane and Stephen Wright said in a statement provided by the park.

Orville Wright was on

board for the world's first powered, controlled flight on Dec. 17, 1903, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The brothers took turns, making four flights that day.

A fragment of Wright Flyer wood and fabric flew to the moon with Apollo 11's Neil Armstrong in 1969. A swatch also accompanied John Glenn into orbit

aboard space shuttle Discovery in 1998. Both astronauts were from Ohio.

NASA's 4-pound (1.8-kilogram) helicopter will attempt to rise 10 feet (3 meters) into the extremely thin Martian air on its first hop. Up to five increasingly higher and longer flights are planned over the course of a month. □

Conceptis Sudoku
By Dave Green

4		5			3			6
		9		8	2			
							8	1
6	3			5				
	7						9	
				7			4	3
5	1							
			5	2		7		
7			1			4		5

Difficulty Level ★★ ★ 3/25

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This illustration made available by NASA depicts the Ingenuity helicopter on Mars which was attached to the bottom of the Perseverance rover, background left.

Associated Press

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Twyla Tharp, nearing 80, isn't slowing down. Next question?

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP National Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — The new PBS documentary on dancer-choreographer Twyla Tharp is called "Twyla Moves." In retrospect, that sounds a bit weak. It really should be called "Twyla Moves And Won't Stop As Long As She Has a Detectable Pulse," a title that might perhaps begin to capture the fierceness with which Tharp, who turns 80 this year, approaches both work and life. It's a fierceness that led her at one point to take boxing lessons with Teddy Atlas, who trained Mike Tyson, to get in the best possible condition for a piece she was doing. "I eventually had to stop boxing because I got hit and broke my nose," she recalled in an interview this week. "I said, 'OK, your boxing days are over.'"

It's also a fierceness that greets you the minute you begin a phone conversation with Tharp, whose words tumble out with striking speed and rarely a second of hesitation. She doesn't need long to formulate fully developed thoughts -- nor does she seem to enjoy wasting time. In a recent Zoom group event, she was asked why she hadn't done more movies. She proceeded to quickly list those she'd done -- "Hair,"



This image released by PBS shows choreographer Twyla Tharp instructing at Pacific Northwest Ballet in a scene from the documentary, "American Masters: Twyla Moves," premiering on March 26.

"White Nights" and "Amadeus" among them -- with just a hint of impatience. Given all that, it would seem obvious that something like a global pandemic wouldn't force Tharp off course, or keep her on the sofa binge-watching Netflix. On a recent afternoon, Tharp began a conversation by explaining why she'd had to postpone a few hours: Since 4 a.m. that morning she'd been choreographing a new work with ballet dancers in

Düsseldorf, Germany. Choreography via Zoom, she noted, "is very strenuous -- very limited from a sensory point of view." And perhaps especially for a choreographer like Tharp, who doesn't simply sit and instruct dancers -- she teaches by showing, even now. To be in that kind of shape approaching one's ninth decade on earth is a challenge that would elude most of us. Part of Tharp's physical regimen involves sticking to

1,200 calories a day. "I don't like carrying extra weight," she says. "I like feeling what I call 'on the bone,' literally very close to the bone. For one thing the feet have suffered a certain amount of abuse, and I like to keep as much weight as possible out of them." It's shocking she hasn't permanently damaged those feet. To say Tharp's choreography is merely athletic is to understate the way in which it has stretched

her artists and herself to the limits. Billy Joel, who collaborated with Tharp on the 2002 Broadway hit "Movin' Out," set to his music, speaks of being in rehearsal and watching dancers "throwing themselves around the stage -- I was worried about people getting injured! I felt like, 'Take it easy! Watch out for the end of the stage!' They were risking life and limb every night."

Musician David Byrne, with whom she worked on an earlier show, "The Catherine Wheel" in 1981, felt the same. "These were top-notch dancers and she was pushing them to the limits of what they could do physically," he says in the film.

Tharp explains it simply: "Part of the adventure for me has always been a physical challenge." She notes matter-of-factly that at one point in her weight training, she could lift 227 pounds, "and I am 108 pounds, so that's twice my body weight. I go for records and that's what I do. I think anybody who works with me expects that same challenge."

Needless to say, Tharp doesn't seem to care a lot about physical comfort -- or comfort of any kind. Ask, for example, whether she was comfortable being the subject of a documentary, and she says drily: "I'm not sure what you mean by comfortable." Enjoyable? Nah. "It's work, like anything else. I don't attach to it commodities like comfort or enjoyment."

Indeed, the theme itself is work. In one old clip, TV host Dick Cavett asks Tharp what she does to relax after a long period of work. "Work more," she replies. "You believe her."

Recording Registry adds albums by Janet Jackson, Nas



Jazz musician Louis Armstrong appears in Rome in 1968, from left, Janet Jackson performs at the Essence Festival in New Orleans on July 8, 2018, and Nas performs at the Essence Festival in New Orleans on July 6, 2019.

By J. LANDRUM Jr.
AP Entertainment Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Janet Jackson's socially conscious album "Rhythm Nation 1814," Louis Arm-

strong's jazzy "When the Saints Go Marching In" and Nas' debut release "Illmatic" are among 25 recordings being inducted to the National

Recording Registry. The Library of Congress announced Wednesday that Labelle's song "Lady Marmalade" and Kool & the Gang's "Celebration" are some of the titles tapped for preservation this year. The national library chose a few more memorable titles including Kermit the Frog's "The Rainbow Connection." Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden said they received about 900 public nominations this year for recordings to add to the registry. "The National Recording Registry will preserve our history through these vibrant

recordings of music and voices that have reflected our humanity and shaped our culture from the past 143 years," Hayden said in a statement. The library selects titles for preservation because of their cultural and historic importance to the American soundscape. The titles have to be at least 10 years old. The registry is adding the 1941 Christmas Eve radio broadcast by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

4	8	5	9	1	3	2	7	6
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5	1	6	4	9	7	8	3	2
8	4	3	5	2	6	7	1	9
7	9	2	1	3	8	4	6	5

Mcllroy suffers worst Match Play loss in 10 years

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Rory Mcllroy hasn't walked off the course this early in 10 years at the Dell Technologies Match Play.

Ian Poulter had a lot to do with that. He hit two pivotal shots to pull away and applied enough pressure on the other holes that Mcllroy had to be a lot sharper than he was Wednesday at Austin Country Club.

The result was a 6-and-5 victory, Mcllroy's worst loss in this World Golf Championship since Ben Crane defeated him, 8 and 7, in the second round in 2011 at Dove Mountain in Arizona.

Poulter never lost the lead after a 6-foot birdie putt on the opening hole, though he was losing momentum. After going 3 up through five holes when Mcllroy hit a tee shot into a swimming pool, Mcllroy won two of the next three holes, the latter with an approach to 3 feet for birdie.

That was as close as he got. Poulter hit a 7-iron to 8 feet to a dangerous pin at the back left of the ninth green for birdie, and he won every hole until it ended on the 13th. The knockout was a 4-iron from 257 yards that Poulter hit to 8 feet for an eagle that Mcllroy — 84 yards past him off the tee — wound up conceding.

Poulter said the score only made it look like an easy day of work.

"You're playing Rory, and it was apparent when you're 1 up after being 3 up that this is not going to be an easy match," Poulter said. "I wanted to keep the foot down because it's too easy to let him back in the game like he did, and then he takes control of the match."

Mcllroy three-putted from 12 feet to lose one hole. Most bizarre was his driver on the 370-yard fifth hole that bounced over a fence and into a pool. He found water on a hole that doesn't have a water hazard.

Most troubling was the number of times Mcllroy had wedge in his hand

and couldn't get it close enough to either put pressure on Poulter or match his birdie attempts.

The end was fitting. He drove over the water and beyond the green on the 288-yard 13th hole. Poulter was off the green in two shots, and Mcllroy's eagle chip raced down the green, over the edge and into the water.

He declined to speak to the media after his round, not unusual in this most personal format. Mcllroy chose not to hold a news conference before the tournament.

He still hasn't publicly commented on bringing in noted English swing coach Pete Cowen into his stable, or the role he will play, or how this affects longtime

coach Michael Bannon.

Mcllroy is not out of the tournament. In group play, he still has two more matches against Lanto Griffin on Thursday and Cameron Smith on Friday. He would have to win them both and have Poulter lose a match to have a chance to win his group and to advance to the weekend.

For starters, this wasn't the game he wanted to see in his final event before the Masters. Mcllroy hasn't won since the HSBC Champions in Shanghai in the fall of 2019. He is coming off a 79 in the opening round at The Players Championship, where he missed the cut. He spoke openly two weeks ago about getting sucked into chasing speed and distance like Bryson



Rory Mcllroy, of Northern Ireland, hits off the fifth tee during a first round match at the Dell Technologies Match Play Championship golf tournament Wednesday, March 24, 2021, in Austin, Texas.

Associated Press

DeChambeau.

"I think there's a couple of areas of his game which I'm sure he wants to kind of firm up a little bit and obviously he missed a couple of tee shots left," Poulter said.

"But it's Rory. It doesn't take a lot for Rory to spark up pretty quickly. I just felt that I had done a pretty decent job of putting him under pressure. I made it difficult for him." □

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Lower cap leads to more cuts than usual in NFL

By JOSH DUBOW
AP Pro Football Writer

If it seemed as if NFL teams have been shedding contracts nearly as fast as signing them in recent weeks that's because it's almost true. With a shrinking salary cap in a sport with few contracts that are fully guaranteed, teams have spent the weeks leading up to free agency and the first few days of the new league year getting out of deals signed in recent years when there was more money available to spend. Whether it was Kansas City getting rid of banged-up and expensive starting offensive tackles Mitchell Schwartz and Eric Fisher, the Raiders cutting ties with Lamarcus Joyner and Tyrell Williams after building their free agent class around them, or Tennessee shedding starting defensive backs Adoree Jackson, Malcolm Butler and Kenny Vaccaro, veterans around the league have been sent to the chopping block. In all, according to transactions data from SportRadar and contract information from Spotrac and Over The Cap, teams have released players with a combined total of approximately \$600 million left on the deals they originally signed between the Super Bowl and the end of the first week of the league year. That figure excludes players who were on rookie or minimum level



Kansas City Chiefs offensive tackle Mitchell Schwartz (71) is shown during an NFL football game against the Houston Texans in Kansas City, Mo., in this Thursday, Sept. 10, 2020, file photo. Associated Press

deals. The cuts have come after the salary cap was reduced from \$198.2 million in 2020 to \$182.5 million in 2021 in response to the reduced revenues resulting from mostly empty stadiums last year because of the coronavirus. The bloodletting could have been even more severe had the league and the NFLPA not agreed to spread those losses over multiple years. "I think the unprecedented part being, for the first time in modern era, the cap decreases instead of increases," Rams general manager Les Snead said. "But again, I think many people on this planet, not just us

in NFL football, have had to make sacrifices, some probably harder than others over the past year." Cutting high-salaried players is nothing new in the NFL where most free agent contracts have teams often committing to paying lucrative signing bonuses and guaranteed money in the first couple of years of a deal and then deciding whether to keep the player or get rid of him to create salary cap room. But the rate of it increased substantially this season because of the lowered cap with the total amount of contracts cut in the same time period equaling about \$445 million in 2020

and \$227 million in 2019. One of the teams in a cutting mode was the Raiders. Coach Jon Gruden bragged in 2019 about the free agent haul he brought in after trading away stars Khalil Mack and Amari Cooper instead of giving them big extensions. He said at the owners meeting that year that the Raiders wouldn't have been able to get players such as Antonio Brown, Trent Brown, Williams and Joyner without those deals. Antonio Brown didn't even last with the team until the opener that season because of run-ins with general manager Mike Mayock and frustration over the

type of helmet the league made him wear. The other three all were sent packing this offseason with Trent Brown traded to New England as part of a 2022 pick swap with two years left on his \$66 million, four-year contract, and Williams and Joyner cut this offseason with more than \$38 million remaining on their contracts. The Raiders also cut guard Richie Incognito and brought him back on a cheaper deal, and traded away starting offensive linemen Rodney Hudson and Gabe Jackson for mid-round picks when they refused to take pay cuts. None of that was part of the original plan. "If you go back two years and say where was the cap going to be this coming season, the answer would have been plus or minus \$225 million," Mayock said. "We're looking at (\$182.5 million). It's simple math." Some players have come out of the situation more than whole. Adoree Jackson got a three-year deal worth a reported \$39 million from the Giants after Tennessee refused to pay his \$10.24 million fifth-year option. Guard Kevin Zeitler got cut with \$12 million left on his contract with the Giants and promptly signed a three-year, \$22.5 million deal with Baltimore that pays him \$10 million this season and guarantees him \$16 million. □

MLB steps up ball monitoring to suppress foreign substances



Atlanta Braves starting pitcher Bryse Wilson (46) works in the first inning of a spring training baseball game against the Boston Red Sox Saturday, March 20, 2021, in North Port, Fla. Associated Press

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball is in-

creasing its monitoring of baseballs in an attempt to suppress any use of foreign substances by pitchers. Mike Hill, newly hired as executive vice president of baseball operations and disciplinarian, wrote in a memorandum to team officials on Tuesday that "players are subject to discipline ... regardless of whether evidence of the violation has been discovered during or following a game." "Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, handling foreign substances, advising a pitcher how to

use or otherwise mask the use of foreign substances, interfering with the collection of game-used baseballs and failing to report observed violations of these rules by players or staff." Hill said team leaders may be held responsible for violations by staff. In a two-page memo to owners, CEOs, team presidents, general managers and managers first reported by ESPN and the New York Post, Hill outlined three new enforcement components. —Gameday compliance monitors and electron-

ics compliance officers will check for violations in dugouts, clubhouses, tunnels, batting cages and bullpens, and they will file daily reports to the commissioner's office. —Umpires, equipment authenticators and compliance personnel will submit baseballs that come out of play to the commissioner's office for inspection and documentation, both suspicious equipment and randomly select balls. A third-party lab will be used for examinations, and suspicious balls will be traced back to pitchers. □